

# SETTING THE STAGE FOR SUCCESS

Strategies to Keep ALL Kids Moving

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# Setting the Stage for Success

## How to Use This Resource

The goal of this guide is to help you to establish a physical literacy environment that fosters inclusion so that ALL children can learn to *#movewell*.

This resource provides Leaders with basic strategies and tools to support individuals who may struggle in some situations. The objective is to facilitate these individuals and encourage maximum participation in the physical literacy program so that every child can experience success. The tools and strategies can also be used to help children with disabilities, particularly those who may encounter barriers to participation.

In Section 1 you will find 5 global strategies;

- Being Proactive
- Use of Equipment
- Positive Reinforcement
- Visual Schedules
- Behavioural Thermometer

Using these strategies effectively will help you to create a positive and supportive environment for all children.

In Section 2 you will find general descriptions of potential challenges you may come across when delivering the program. Strategies specific to each challenge are provided.

As always we are here to help you! If you have any concerns or questions, about how to deal with a behavioural issue, please reach out to your Program Director who will be more than willing to help you find and implement positive solutions.

As well, if you have tried a strategy that has been effective and has resulted in a positive outcome, please send us an email. We love hearing, learning from and sharing these experiences.



**Keep a watchful eye for the blue links** highlighted throughout this guide They will link to PDF formats of printable resources.

# Section 1

## Strategies for Success

- » Being Proactive
- » Use of Equipment
- » Positive Reinforcement
- » Visual Schedules
- » Behavioral Thermometer



# Being Proactive

## Why Is It Important?

Being proactive is a fundamental component in “setting the stage for success” when interacting with children.

Being proactive means being prepared, anticipating what issues might arise, looking for solutions to the issues and doing your best to prevent them from happening in the first place. Being proactive takes time and preparation, however it can lead to a much more positive experience than being reactive (i.e responding to problems as they are happening).

Negative behaviours can often be avoided by being prepared and by removing triggers!

### ➤ Create a Structured Environment

#### ➤ Be Prepared

- Review session plan prior to session.
- Know and understand the content (practice skill).
- Arrive early.
- Check that equipment is available and safe for use.
- Check activity space is safe and free from distractions.

#### ➤ Establish Clear Routines and Expectations

- Creates a sense of security for children.
- Helps foster independence in children.
- Helps with group management.
- Helps with time management.

#### ➤ Create an Emotionally Safe Environment

- Role model positive behaviour:
  - Be respectful to children and adults.
  - Speak clearly and calmly.
  - Use positive language, even when dealing with an issue.
  - Demonstrate positive body language.
  - Demonstrate enthusiasm for what you are teaching.
  - Have fun!
- Celebrate (even the small successes) with the children.

#### ➤ Communicate with Purpose

- Speak clearly and confidently.
- Be concise when giving instructions.
- Be mindful of your body language (keep it positive).
- Ensure children are demonstrating “whole body listening”.
- Use verbal and visual cues.
- Use “start” and “stop” signals (verbal and visual).

# Use of Equipment

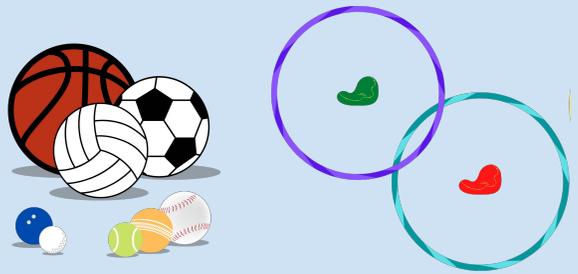
## Why Is It Important?

Sensory processing is a neurological process where the messages received from a person's senses (through their body and environment) are organized and turned into motor and behavioral responses. Some children's sense of touch may be hypo-responsive (under responsive) or hyper-responsive (very sensitive).

Using the right equipment for a particular child, can make a difference in their level of engagement and enjoyment in an activity. Using the "not so right" equipment can make a child uncomfortable, anxious or afraid to participate. Thus, if a child is not participating in an activity or perhaps acting inappropriately during an activity, it may help to take note of how the child is interacting with the equipment. It could be that the child is experiencing difficulties with sensory processing or perhaps they just need some time to become more familiar with the new equipment.

## Use of Equipment Strategies

- Use equipment that promotes sensory input.
  - Bumpy balls, foam balls, beach balls
  - Sponge or foam mats
  - Scarves
  - Tactile floor discs/spots
  - Balls that light up



- Allow the child some choice of equipment for the activity.
  - "Which of these balls would you like to use?"
  - "Which colour hula hoop would you prefer?"

- Bold and contrasting colours stimulate visual interest.
  - Think about the colour of cones you use when marking off an activity space.

- Bumpy textured balls enhances the feeling of touch.



- Foam balls are easier to grasp and hold on to.

- Extra equipment lying around may be distracting to some children, only take out the equipment that is needed.

- Use the appropriate sized equipment.
  - Large bouncy, hard balls may be too overwhelming for small hands.

# Positive Reinforcement

## Why Is It Important?

Reinforcement is anything that increases the likelihood of a desired behaviour being repeated. Positive reinforcement is an effective strategy that should be used with all children regardless of needs or ability. Positively reinforcing a child for a desired behaviour will most likely increase the child's willingness to actively participate in the program. It can also help to build confidence, self-esteem and develop positive relationships. Positive reinforcement also helps to maintain desired behaviours over a longer period of time.

Conversely, punishment involves a negative consequence being given or something being taken away, from the child. Punishment teaches the child what behaviour is not wanted but it does not teach the child what behaviour is desired. Punishing a child can also temporarily or permanently affect your relationship with the child. Thus, whenever possible, punishing a child should be avoided.

## Positive Reinforcement Strategies

- Social Praise
  - High fives
  - Thumbs up



- Verbal Praise
  - *"That movement was awesome!"*
  - *"Great job!"*
  - *"Wow! I like the way you played with your classmates during that game."*

- Tangible Objects - Reinforcers
  - Stickers
  - Gets to hold a stuffy for 5 minutes
  - [Positive Statement cards](#)
  - Extra time playing with their favourite toy
  - Activity of choice
  - Tokens accumulated towards a larger reward



I'm working for				
				



# Visual Schedules

## Why Is It Important?

A visual schedule illustrates the order of events or activities that will take place during a period of time. Visual schedules can and are used for various reasons and with many different types of learners. It has been shown that the use of visual schedules helps to decrease negative behaviours and to increase engagement in activities.

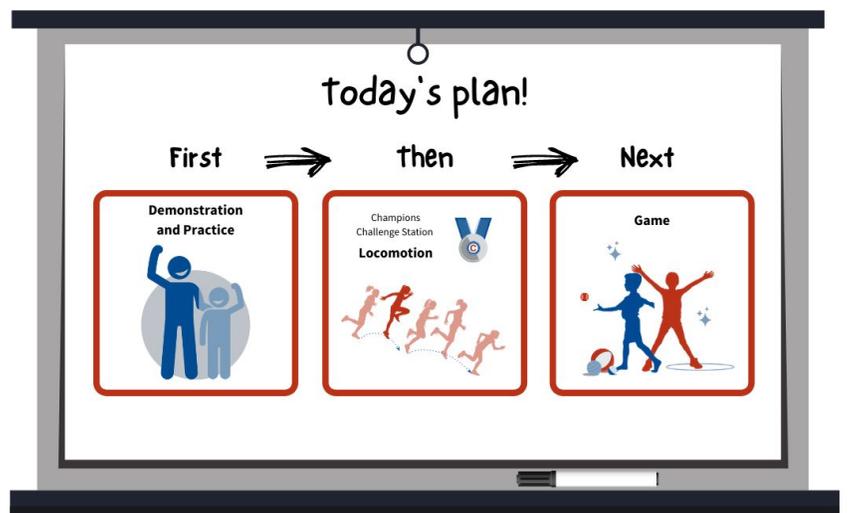
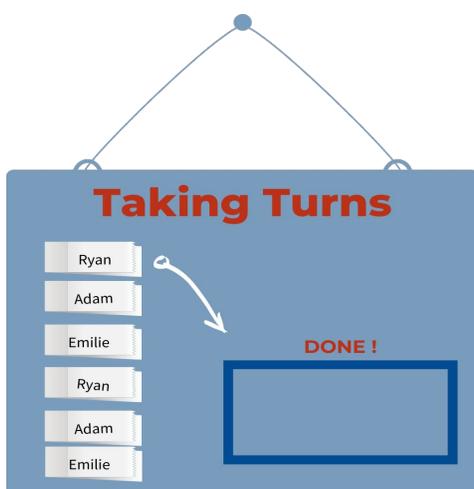
Visual schedules help children:

- Know where they are in the program.
- Prepare for the next activity.
- Provides a reminder of when the activity comes to an end.
- Makes transitions easier.
- Reduces the “unknown” anxiety.
- Encourages autonomy.



## Visual Schedule Strategies

- Adapt schedule to the needs of the child.
- Use objects/images/words that the child understands and means something to them.
- Review schedule with the child to confirm their understanding.
- Keep the schedule visible and accessible for the child.
- Be consistent.



Like the cards?  
Download the PDF version  
that suits you best.



[Small](#), [Large](#)  
(total of 6 cards)

# Behaviour Thermometer

## Why Is It Important?

Many children, at some point or another, can experience difficulties in interacting with others. This can stem from a variety of reasons such as environmental factors, anxiety, fear of the unknown, low self-confidence etc. Social interactions can also be difficult for children with certain disabilities.

Children experiencing difficulty in social settings can exhibit negative behaviours that can be disruptive to others.

The [Behaviour Thermometer](#) is a strategy that can be used to help in these situations. It encourages a child to better understand what is expected of them. It also helps them recognize their own negative behaviours so that they can make adjustments to their behaviour before it becomes very disruptive. In other words it helps them to self-regulate.

## How to Use the Behaviour Thermometer

1. Choose a target behaviour (e.g. often talks way too loudly).

2. Determine with the child what each number or level on the thermometer represents in terms of the specific behaviour being targeted. For example:

- Level 1, 2 “Too soft”
- Level 3 “Just right”
- Level 4, 5 “Way too loud”

3. Write the levels of the behaviour on the thermometer.

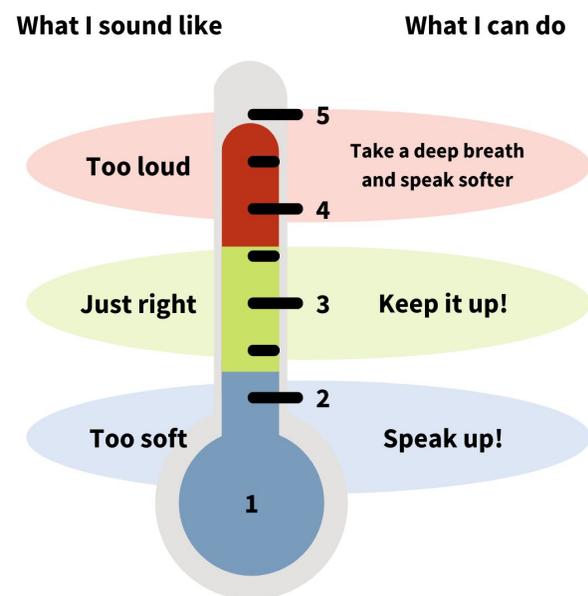
4. Give the child the opportunity to demonstrate what these levels would look/sound like in themselves and in others.

- *What does too loud sound like?*
- *What does too quiet sound like?*
- *What does “just right” sound like?*

5. Keep the thermometer somewhere where the child can see it, or carry it with you.

6. Once the child is more skillful at identifying and self-regulating their behaviour, instead of using the Behaviour Thermometer, you can simply use your fingers to indicate the level that they are at (e.g. level 1 (too quiet) hold up 1 finger, level 5 (too loud) hold up 5 fingers).

### Example :



# Section 2

## Possible Challenges

- »» Difficulty with Transitions
- »» Lack of Engagement in Activities
- »» Disruptive Behaviours
- »» Turn Taking and Sharing



# Difficulty with Transitions

## Understanding the Issue

Children can experience difficulty transitioning from one activity to another for a variety of reasons, such as being tired, hungry, confused, anxious or afraid. By getting to know their needs and abilities, and planning ahead, problems at transition times can be reduced or avoided altogether.

## Possible Challenges

- Doesn't want to join the session.
- Refuses to leave one challenge station to go to the next.
- Doesn't want to leave the gym at the end of the session.

## Strategies

- Provide positive reinforcement.
- Create and consistently use a visual schedule.
- Review schedule at beginning of each class.
- Give a prompt or warning:
  - *"When I count to 10 we are going to move onto ..."*
  - *"You have 1 more turn and then you get to go to ..."*
  - *"In 5 minutes we are going to..."*
- Use a clock to show time frame
  - More effective if child has a small clock to carry or is wearing a watch.
- Keep transitions quick and efficient.
- Partner with a peer for modelling and promoting positive behaviour.

# Lack of Engagement in Activities

## Understanding the Issue

Most young children like being physically active and love to play. However, there are some children who have difficulties engaging in physical activities and there can be many reasons why this happens. Some reasons might be that the child is confused about what is being asked, or may feel they “aren't good at sports” and thus are afraid or anxious to participate. Being tired or hungry after a long day of school may also lead to lack of engagement. Or there may be more complex reasons why a child refuses to participate. As a leader it is important to create a safe and positive environment that encourages the inclusion of all children.

## Possible Challenges

- Refuses to participate in activities.
- Wants to “sit out”.
- Gives excuses/reasons why they “can't” .
- Lack of energy.
- Lack of interest.
- Anxious about participating in activity.

## Strategies

- Set realistic and attainable goals with them. For example:
  - *“I would like you to try to play the game for 5 minutes.”*
  - *“Let's pick 1 challenge station you are willing to try today.”*
- Provide positive reinforcement. Remember to:
  - Have the reinforcer accessible and with you at all times.
  - Change your reinforcements every so often, so that the child doesn't get tired of them.
  - Be consistent.
  - Never “take it away”. Do not remove reinforcement as a consequence for “negative behaviour”.
- Partner with a friend.
- Focus on the “fun”.
- Use the child's preferences for motivation:
  - Allow some choice of equipment.
  - Provide equipment that is the participants favourite colour.
  - Allow participant to choose which ball to use, etc.

# Disruptive Behaviours

## Understanding the Issue

In most cases children do not intentionally try to be disruptive or behave negatively. In many cases, disruptive behaviour can be a result of anxiety, frustration or fear of the unknown. As well, if a child is not confident in their ability to perform a certain skill, they may act out to avoid doing that skill or to cause a diversion away from the task at hand. As a leader, it is important to remember to not take the disruptive behaviour personally. Rather, try to remain calm when dealing with the child and try to implement strategies that will help the child manage their behaviour.

## Possible Challenges

- Interrupting you when you are giving instructions.
- Poor listening.
- Not following instructions.
- Always moving, fidgety.
- Throwing tantrums.
- Anxious about participating in activity.

## Strategies

- Be proactive.
- Provide positive reinforcement.
- Use of the right equipment.
- Create and use a behavioural thermometer for child.
- Remain calm when speaking to child.
- Set clear behavioural boundaries, rules and expectations.
- Demonstrate what “whole body listening” looks like.
- Check for understanding:
  - Ask child to repeat instructions to ensure they have heard and understood.
- Reduce distractions, remove all unnecessary items and equipment near the child.
- Use eye contact when speaking to child.
- Refocus their attention.
  - Give them a task to do (e.g. *Today you are my equipment manager*).
  - Make them your “helper” .

# Turn Taking and Sharing

## Understanding the Issue

Turn taking and sharing are life skills that don't always come naturally to some children. Depending on the child's experiences and home environment they may not have acquired these skills when they first start school. Thus these skills need to be taught and opportunities need to be provided for them to be practiced.

Challenging behaviour often presents itself in situations due to the individual not understanding what is expected of them or thinking they will never get a turn again.

## Possible Challenges

- Does not want to wait in line for their turn.
- Always runs to the front of the line.
- "Pushing" in line.
- Refuses to participate in group activities.
- Refuses to share equipment with others.
- Shouts out phrases such as, "This is mine!"
- Anxious about participating in activity.

## Strategies

- Be proactive.
- Provide positive reinforcement.
- Create and use a visual schedule.
- Think of equipment being used.
- Explain that turn taking means:
  - "You can play and then your friend has a chance to play, then you can play again."
  - "You can have a turn and then 3 friends each get a turn, then you have another turn."
- Suggest what they can do while waiting their turn:
  - *Count to 20, 40 etc., count by 2's, by 5's.*
  - *Watch your friends have their turn.*
  - *Sing a favourite song quietly or in your head.*
- Allow child to hold something in their hand while waiting their turn.
- Explain why sharing is important for the activity.

# THANK YOU

A sincere thank you to Lee Ann Dufresne for helping us research and develop this guide. We are also grateful to Amy MacFarlane for her time spent reviewing our work and providing us with valuable feedback along the way. We sincerely appreciate your time, commitment and passion for helping all children live a healthy and active life. Thank you!

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Lee Ann is a social worker with over 22 years of experience working in the public sector. Her last 14 years have been working with families and individuals 0-21 years of age with special needs including Autism Spectrum Disorder, intellectual disability, and severe behaviour disorders (TGC). In an Adaptation and Rehabilitation setting, she is dedicated to providing support to her clients and their caregivers so that they can reach their full potential.



Amy MacFarlane  
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Amy is a disability ally and passionate about inclusion. She is committed to removing barriers that those with disabilities face in their communities, to promote active and inclusive participation.

